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EPA Region III
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Mid-Atlantic Headlines
Tuesday, July 30, 2013

*** DAILY HOT LIST ***

WV Democrats to discuss coal with EPA chief, Obama advisers

CHARLESTON DAILY MAIL CHARLESTON, W.Va. - State Democratic lawmakers are meeting Thursday at the White House with the new leader of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and "senior advisers" to President Barack Obama. It shows the administration is taking state lawmaker's concerns about EPA rules and regulations relating to coal seriously, said West Virginia Democratic Party Chairman Larry Puccio. "We are scheduled to meet with EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy and senior advisers to President Obama," Puccio said in a news release. "We are looking forward to a thoughtful and productive discussion." Puccio announced the trip to Washington last week, but he said details about where and with whom the group would meet were still in the works. On Monday, he said he hadn't previously known they'd be able to meet with McCarthy or "senior advisers" to the president, and he's very excited for the trip. Puccio was one of several state Democrats to speak at last week's announcement. Senate President Jeff Kessler, D-Marshall, and House Speaker Tim Miley, D-Harrison, both emphasized the importance of the trip. During last week's announcement, there was little talk about specific regulations or rules that lawmakers thought were hurting the state. After the press event, both Kessler and Miley said deadlines for coal companies to meet carbon emission standards are a concern. The three Democratic members of the national delegation - U.S. Sens. Jay Rockefeller and Joe Manchin and U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall - each endorsed the trip when it was announced. Last week, Puccio said the trip is not a reflection on their efforts to voice concerns from West Virginians about the EPA or the president's energy policy.

Fracking tied to Pennsylvania water woes by EPA state official

BLOOMBERG NEWS SERVICE WASHINGTON — Gas drilling caused “significant damage” to drinking-water aquifers in a Pennsylvania town at the center of a fight over the safety of hydraulic fracturing, according to a report prepared by a federal official. The previously unreleased document from an employee at the Environmental Protection Agency's regional office found that fracking, in which water, sand and chemicals are shot underground to free trapped gas, caused methane to leak into domestic water wells in Dimock, Pa. The findings contradict Cabot Oil and Gas Corp., which drilled in the town and said the explosive methane gas was naturally occurring. “Methane is released during the drilling and perhaps during the fracking process and other gas well work,” according to the undated power-point presentation prepared by the EPA coordinator in Dimock, who isn't identified, for other agency officials. The report, obtained by Bloomberg from fracking critics, is based on a chemical analysis of methane in wells. The EPA said the findings in the presentation were preliminary and needed more study. Dimock has become a symbol for opponents questioning the safety of fracking. In 2010, state regulators stepped in and said Cabot's drilling contaminated local wells, a finding disputed by the company. A subsequent EPA investigation said the water posed no health risks to town residents. “You would really expect the federal government to follow up on this,” Kate Sindig, director of the Natural Resources Defense Council's fracking defense project, said in an interview about this report. While the internal report, disclosed by the *Los Angeles Times* on July 27, doesn't necessarily contradict the EPA's 2012 finding of elevated levels of methane and conclusion that the water was safe to drink, it does show that at least one official determined that Cabot's work damaged the water wells.

Devonian shale offers another layer for natural gas drillers in W.Va.

WHEELING INTELLIGENCER (Saturday) WHEELING, West Virginia — Move aside, Marcellus and Utica shales, and make way for a new player in the natural gas bonanza: the Devonian Shale. Earlier this month, Consol Energy became the third company to successfully extract natural gas from the Devonian, following Rex Energy Corp. and Range Resources Corp. The company's drilling attempt took place in Greene County, Pennsylvania, which lies on the eastern border of Marshall County and the northeastern border of Wetzel County. Tim Carr, Marshall Miller professor of energy at West Virginia University, said the Upper Devonian is a mix of sandstone and other forms of rock. It lies just above the Marcellus Shale, which underlies much of West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Ohio. The Utica Shale is a much older formation that lies deeper within the earth compared to the Marcellus and Upper Devonian, he said. "There are lots of black shale units," Carr said regarding the Upper Devonian Shale. "How much gas and liquids is the question. There is no answer at the present. There is potential." "The Devonian Shale was the target of a lot of drilling activity back in the late 1970s and the 1980s," added Robert W. Chase, professor of petroleum engineering and geology at Marietta College. "It produced both oil and gas, but was not as prolific as the Marcellus or Utica because it was not very deep and didn't have as much pressure as the deeper formations." Consol's first endeavor into the formation hit the Upper Devonian at 12,490 feet deep in Greene County, according to the company's quarterly filing report. It drew about 3 million cubic feet per day, roughly a third of the output of two nearby Marcellus wells. Consol drilled its Upper Devonian Shale well in the Burkett formation, which is the deepest of numerous Upper Devonian shales. Consol officials said they chose to drill their first well in the Burkett in order to test the potential interaction with deeper Marcellus Shale wells. Corky Demarco, executive director of the West Virginia Oil and Natural Gas Association, said most of the Upper Devonian wells drilled in the Mountain State have largely resulted in the production of dry methane gas, rather than liquids or oil. He said it is "considerably" cheaper to drill an Upper Devonian well because it is not as deep or complex as one in the Marcellus or Utica. Instead of millions of gallons of water, sand and chemicals, Demarco said Upper Devonian wells in West Virginia are usually fracked with hydrogen. "If natural gas prices increase, you could see more of these wells drilled," he said.

Marcellus Shale Coalition looking for new leadership

PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE Katie Klaber, the first CEO of the Marcellus Shale Coalition, said Friday that she's in her last few months on the post and that the organization is looking for a new leader. The coalition, formed in 2008 to advocate for oil and gas operators working in the Marcellus play, brought Ms. Klaber onboard in late 2009. She was previously an executive with the Allegheny Conference on Economic Development. According to the organization's 990 tax form, Ms. Klaber earned \$361,115 in 2010, her first full year, and \$532,996 in 2011, the last for which data is available. Ms. Klaber was employed under a contract with the organization and the decision to separate was made within the context of that contract, the coalition said. Over the past three and a half years, the organization has expanded to five locations in Pennsylvania and 16 full-time staffers. It has 43 full members, who each pay hefty \$50,000 annual membership fees, and 239 associate members, who pay \$15,000 annually. In 2011, its revenue was \$7.3 million.Ms. Klaber said she's proud of her success on many regulatory and legislative fronts, but the one still gnawing at her is the issue of local government control over drilling. The organization has promoted having statewide rather than local rules for where companies can drill, as is outlined in Pennsylvania's Act 13, parts of which are still being debated in court."We've called that the Achilles' heel of the Pennsylvania system," Ms. Klaber said.The Coalition's next leader will have to deal with that, she said.Ms. Klaber will be part of the search committee looking for a replacement over the next several months. The coalition wants a candidate familiar with Pennsylvania, with the operators in the Marcellus Shale, and someone who could unite companies to advocate with a "strong, single voice," Ms. Klaber said. The organization won't change after her departure, she said. It will continue to be in Pittsburgh, although now and then its members consider relocating to Harrisburg. It will continue to be called by its established brand, to the exclusion of other shales creeping up in this area, namely the Utica.

Editorial: The gas industry has a good story to tell

CHARLESTON DAILY MAIL Recent comments by a retired oil and gas industry executive shows there is room for improvement on both sides of the natural gas fracking debate. Former Shell Oil President John Hofmeister told The Associated Press that arrogance and lack of communication by the industry has helped fuel public anger over of hydraulic fracturing. That's unfortunate, because the oil and gas industry has a good story to tell. Technological improvements in drilling have reduced the nation's reliance on foreign oil imports and created a domestic drilling boom. The U.S. Energy Information Administration reports that oil imports are down 22.5 percent from their high in 2005. In West Virginia, employment in the natural gas industry has nearly tripled since 2001. "Suddenly we have a 200-year supply of natural gas, when just a few years ago some predicted our supplies were running out," wrote Greg Kozera, president of the West Virginia Oil and Natural Gas Association. Fracturing natural gas reservoirs is not new. It was developed in the 1940s to extract more natural gas. It's the ability to facture tight shale formations that's new. Hydraulic fracturing uses massive amounts of water with a small amount of additives. The water must be handled with care when it flows back to the surface. Some opponents of fracking raise legitimate concerns, but some are highly exaggerated. The documentary "Gasland," by environmental activist Josh Fox, is fraught with so much bias that the industry produced a counter, "Truthland." Experts say both pro- and anti- drilling movements have good points. Jeff Frankel, an economics professor at Harvard, says the fracking revolution is good news from a national security and economic standpoint, but still urges caution.

Blog: Sound measures show progress in the Chesapeake

RICHMOND TIMES DISPATCH (Sunday) The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) and Choose Clean Water Coalition's (CCWC) op-ed published July 9 unfortunately failed to give readers a full and accurate picture of Virginia's efforts to restore the health of the Chesapeake Bay. Let me follow the same "report card" analogy they used. Imagine if your child received a "C" on a 42-question test and you found out later the teacher based the grade on only eight of the 42 test questions? Then imagine if the teacher announced your child's interim grade in the school newspaper, touting your child's failures. Not fair, right? That is exactly the approach used by these Maryland-based groups in their flawed analysis and commentary on Virginia's Chesapeake Bay milestones. **The Bay milestones**, a series of 42 measures and techniques, were established as short-term checkpoints toward accomplishing pollution reductions called for under the Chesapeake Bay's "pollution diet" established by the Environmental Protection Agency. Each state that shares in the care of the Chesapeake Bay projects the number of pollution reduction actions that will be taken in the next two years. We are in the middle of a milestone period and so, by definition, our current milestones are not complete. It is also regrettable that the CBF and CCWC didn't take the time to consult Virginia's career technical experts who have uncovered significant flaws in the EPA's Chesapeake Bay computer model that produces results contrary to the actual implementation by Virginia farmers, localities, businesses and others. Other Bay states have joined with Virginia to point out these computer flaws that underestimate the pollution reduction impact of Virginia's actions.

Former aircraft parts plant site in Va. to be cleaned up, EPA assessing contaminants

ASSOCIATED PRESS (Monday) CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. — Federal regulators are assessing pollutants at the site of a former aircraft parts manufacturer near the Charlottesville Albemarle Airport to determine the scope of the contamination. Toxic chemical solvents have been found in soil and groundwater at the site and in the Walnut Hills subdivision. Tetrachloroethlyne is a carcinogen. The Environmental Protection Agency is expected to complete field work at the site in August, said Donna McCartney, the project manager. The investigation is expected to last 18 months. We only started the investigation, so we don't even know the entire universe of contaminants that may be present," McCartney told The Daily Progress (<http://bit.ly/14XycB1>). "But before anything else, the extent of the contamination needs to be delineated." The plant formerly was owned by Teledyne. Its current owner, Avionics Specialties Inc., discovered the contamination in 2007 as it was preparing to close the plant and sell it. The company subsequently contacted homeowners in the subdivision and the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. Ten homes in the subdivision were outfitted with carbon filters as a precaution. Properties closest to the plant site are monitored by both the DEQ and Avionics, DEQ spokesman William Hayden told the newspaper. Hayden said that homeowners weren't told by the DEQ that one of the contaminants, tetrachloroethylene, is a carcinogen. "We would not have told them any of the side effects. We're not health experts," Hayden said. In 2008, Avionics applied for a voluntary remediation permit to address the contamination but the state denied the application, saying there were insufficient data to construct a detailed environmental history of the site. Avionics then conducted historical and scientific studies in an attempt to locate the contamination's source. The DEQ contacted the EPA in 2010. Two years later, the EPA announced a settlement with both companies to investigate the contamination and alternatives for cleanup. "A process should not take this long when, in fact, there are chemicals involved that could be harmful," said Michael Kane, president of the Walnut Hill Homeowners Association. Kane said the situation should have been remedied in 2007. "Trying to figure out who was responsible — Teledyne, Avionics, everyone else. It was finger-pointing. That's all it was," Kane said. "That's the frustration."

U.S. Energy secretary: Obama committed to role for coal

CHARLESTON GAZETTE MORGANTOWN, W.Va. -- President Obama and the U.S. Department of Energy are committed to a role for coal in a national energy strategy, and they've backed it up with research spending, Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz said Monday. In a visit to the National Energy Technology Laboratory in Morgantown -- the only one of the federal government's 17 national labs dedicated to fossil fuels -- Moniz said the administration has spent \$6 billion on clean-coal technology with an emphasis on the capture, storage and reuse of carbon emissions. "We have an 'all of the above' strategy, and it's real," he said. But the administration also believes the U.S. must prepare for a low-carbon economy, so scientists must help find ways to use coal and gas more cleanly. Moniz spoke to hundreds of federal employees who work at the West Virginia lab, and to those who watched remotely from research sites and small offices in Pennsylvania, Oregon, Alaska and Texas. In all, the national lab employs 1,426 people, about 850 of whom are contractors. Last month, Obama laid out a general plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase both the production of clean energy and energy efficiency. That worries the coal industry and angers some of the politicians who support it, including U.S. Rep. David McKinley, a West Virginia Republican who has long questioned the science behind global warming. McKinley, who now

acknowledges climate change but is not convinced human activity is to blame, accompanied Moniz on a tour of the lab but didn't speak to reporters. Moniz said the challenges from climate change are serious. The world is already seeing the effects in more severe floods, heat waves and droughts that drive up food and energy prices. Rising temperatures also stoke more intense storms that threaten electrical grids and other key infrastructure. "But we've always found a way to innovate our way to a more prosperous future," Moniz said, "and we will do the same in this case." Coal and natural gas industry officials have joked about the president's commitment to an "all of the above strategy," suggesting he means all energy sources aboveground. Moniz acknowledged the skepticism in coal country but insisted the commitment is genuine. He wouldn't predict how big the role for coal might be, saying that's up to consumers. But it will remain part of the fuel mix for decades to come.

An update on the U.S. natural gas boom (Audio Link)

NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO - RADIO TIMES (Monday) . The hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking,” process of drilling natural gas from Pennsylvania’s Marcellus Shale has reportedly been getting a lot of foreign interest as a potential solution to global energy problems. In about five years the shale boom has changed the domestic energy economy, but there are reports the U.S. is considering exporting the gas beyond our shores. Meanwhile Governor Corbett has signed a bill into law allowing gas companies to combine, or ‘pool’ leases – many signed before the advent of fracking. We get an update on the local issues of Marcellus Shale drilling with State Impact Pennsylvania’s **MARIE CUSICK** and a broader look at natural gas extraction with ProPublica’s **ABRAHM LUSTGARTEN**.
- See more at: http://why.org/cms/radiotimes/2013/07/29/an-update-on-the-u-s-natural-gas-boom/#sthash.0RweXpzf.dpuf

PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

Longer pollen seasons nothing to sneeze at *One in a series of occasional articles about the regional effects of climate change and how we're coping.* Even though she'd been walking in the woods for only a few minutes, Jen McIntyre was in distress. Tears were running down her cheeks. She couldn't breathe through her nose. "I feel like this is our new reality," McIntyre said recently of the allergies that have begun to plague her. McIntyre, 43, of Mount Airy, never had allergies, aside from reactions to the odd dog or horse. Now, she feels as though her body has gone beyond some sort of tipping point. Did something happen to her? Or did it happen to the world around her? Perhaps both. Earlier springs and later fall frosts linked to climate change have already lengthened the pollen season - in some areas, significantly, by two weeks or more, studies show. Plants are blooming earlier and staying in bloom longer. On top of that, plants are pumping out more pollen. And there are indications that the "allergenicity" - the potency of the pollen - is increasing. The number of people who are sensitized to pollen is rising as well.Climate change is neither a polar phenomenon nor something in the future. It is "already affecting the health of individuals within our communities," said George Luber, associate director for climate change at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

Plan to put gas pipeline in Pinelands spurs ire (NJ) (Sunday) A proposal to build a natural gas pipeline across 14 miles of the New Jersey Pinelands drew an angry crowd Friday to the Pinelands Commission's offices in Pemberton, where dozens of speakers urged commissioners to veto the plan. "Put a stake through the heart of this monster," Victor Maene of the environmental group 350.ORG told the commission's policy and implementation committee. South Jersey Gas Corp., based in Atlantic County, seeks to run a 22-mile natural gas pipeline from Maurice River Township, Cumberland County, to a proposed electrical-generation plant in Upper Township, Cape May County. Most of the line would run along the right-of-way of Route 49, buried under the road or grass shoulder. Eight miles would be outside the Pinelands, a 1.1 million expanse of protected pine and oak forest and sandy soil that is home to an 17-trillion-gallon aquifer. The 24-inch-diameter pipe would serve a proposed gas-fired power plant at Beesleys Point on the Great Egg Harbor River to be operated by B.L. England Corp. (BLE). Committee chairman Mark Lohbauer, who several times had to tap his gavel to quiet shouting and clapping, reminded the crowd packed into the commission's rustic offices that this was only his committee's regular monthly meeting. "This is not a hearing, and this is not testimony," Lohbauer said. "We're simply hearing information about an application before us."The committee will make a recommendation to the full commission, which has authority to halt the project. Lohbauer assured the audience that his committee would have additional meetings and that the commission would hold a formal hearing before making a decision.

PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE

Blog: Marcellus Shale Coalition looking for new leadership Katie Klaber, the first CEO of the Marcellus Shale Coalition, said Friday that she's in her last few months on the post and that the organization is looking for a new leader. The coalition, formed in 2008 to advocate for oil and gas operators working in the Marcellus play, brought Ms. Klaber onboard in late 2009. She was previously an executive with the Allegheny Conference on Economic Development. According to the organization's 990 tax form, Ms. Klaber earned \$361,115 in 2010, her first full year, and \$532,996 in 2011, the last for which data is available. Ms. Klaber was employed under a contract with the organization and the decision to separate was made within the context of that contract, the coalition said. Over the past three and a half years, the organization has expanded to five locations in Pennsylvania and 16 full-time staffers. It has 43 full members, who each pay hefty \$50,000 annual membership fees, and 239 associate members, who pay \$15,000 annually. In 2011, its revenue was \$7.3 million.Ms. Klaber said she's proud of her success on many regulatory and legislative fronts, but the one still gnawing at her is the issue of local government control over drilling. The organization has promoted having statewide rather than local rules for where companies can drill, as is outlined in Pennsylvania's Act 13, parts of which are still being debated in court."We've called that the Achilles' heel of the Pennsylvania system," Ms. Klaber said.The Coalition's next leader will have to deal with that, she said.Ms. Klaber will be part of the search committee looking for a replacement over the next several months. The coalition wants a candidate familiar with Pennsylvania, with the operators in the Marcellus Shale, and someone who could unite companies to advocate with a "strong, single voice," Ms. Klaber said. The organization won't change after her departure, she said. It will continue to be in Pittsburgh, although now and then its members consider relocating to Harrisburg. It will continue to be called by its established brand, to the exclusion of other shales creeping up in this area, namely the Utica.
Century-old coal mine in Mount Oliver to be filled (Sunday) Two weeks after mine subsidence damaged more than 20 houses, crews attempted to begin the slow process of filling in an abandoned mine Friday in Mount Oliver. The foundation of the homes suffered cracking, holes and shifting of the foundation when the century-old mine under Frederick Street experienced a subsidence. Officials are still unsure what caused the mine to move but say it is possible that its structure partially collapsed. "It was like a three-ring circus down here," said resident Ray Augustine. Concern among residents has begun to die down now that the Department of Environmental Protection has begun work to prevent further damage. "Exactly 57 holes are going to be burrowed into the ground," said DEP spokesman John Poister. "Then we will pump in a concrete sand mixture into the mine cavities beneath the homes. It will harden and stabilize the ground."

PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE REVIEW

Drilling begins to stabilize Mt. Oliver homes Testing for mine subsidence in Mt. Oliver Borough could expand when the state Department of Environmental Protection finishes filling sinkholes that damaged homes on Frederick Street, officials said. Coastal Drilling East of Morgantown on Friday began tapping into the mine more than 200 feet below the street and will shoot cement in it to stabilize shaky ground. Ten homes sustained damage, and subsidence threatens 10 others. The \$1.35 million project is expected to take six to eight weeks. “In the last 10 years, we’ve been in Mt. Oliver four times (for emergency mine subsidence),” said Gene Trio, a DEP mining engineer. “Based on that, it warrants an exploratory drilling project to determine the extent of damage.” What DEP finds on Frederick Street will determine whether more testing and stabilization are necessary, said agency spokesman John Poister. Problems on Frederick Street date to long-defunct Ivill

Mining Co., which worked the area from the 1860s until 1922, Trio said. This is Mt. Oliver's worst case of subsidence, according to borough engineer Ruthann Omer. “It's not unusual in these types of situations for DEP to check if they got it all and if there are any possibilities for more of that to happen,” she said, adding that all residents should buy subsidence insurance. “We'd appreciate if they would do that, because we don't want to see that happening to another street in the borough.”

PITTSBURGH BUSINESS TIMES

Blog: 5 minutes with Kathryn Klaber, Marcellus Shale Coalition Kathryn Klaber, the founding CEO of the Marcellus Shale Coalition, announced Friday that she would be leaving the MSC over the next few months. I caught up with her via telephone. Here's an edited transcript of our chat. **What went into the decision to leave the Marcellus Shale Coalition at this time?** We've built a good thing here, and we're managing a transition ... It's a natural time to think about the next chapter both for the industry and my professional career.

STATE IMPACT PENNSYLVANIA

LA Times: EPA Not in Agreement Over Dimock (Sunday) Regional officials with the Environmental Protection Agency based in Philadelphia did not agree with EPA's national office to close the investigation on water contamination in Dimock, according to a piece published in Sunday's Los Angeles Times. An internal Power Point presentation leaked to the Times shows at least one staffer at Philadelphia's region 3 office linked contaminants such as methane, arsenic and manganese to nearby gas drilling....On July 25, 2012, the EPA announced it had completed its testing of drinking water supplies in the Susquehanna County village, and would halt its water deliveries. The EPA says it did find hazardous levels of barium, arsenic or manganese in the water supplies of five households. But the Agency said treatment systems could reduce the amount of toxins to safe levels. At the time, EPA Regional Administrator Shawn Garvin said no more action was needed to protect the public health of Dimock residents, with regard to drinking water. “The sampling and an evaluation of the particular circumstances at each home did not indicate levels of contaminants that would give EPA reason to take further action,” said Garvin. “Throughout EPA's work in Dimock, the Agency has used the best available scientific data to provide clarity to Dimock residents and address their concerns about the safety of their drinking water.” Garvin also emphasized at the time that the EPA's mission in Dimock was not to investigate whether or not gas drilling caused the contamination, rather, to determine residents could safely drink their well water. A spokesperson for the EPA in Washington, D.C. recently told the Los Angeles Times that the leaked presentation was a “preliminary evaluation” conducted by one employee. The article does not include a copy of the document, but gives this description:

LEWISTOWN SENTINEL

Editorial: Senate Democrats needed to support coal ash measure A broad, bipartisan coalition of lawmakers supports Rep. David McKinley's bill to regulate coal ash. Democrats in the Senate should take the same open-minded view of the measure. House of Representatives members approved the bill, HR 2218, last week, by a wide margin and with bipartisan support. McKinley, R-W.Va., has waged a long, intense campaign to craft rules on coal ash, generated in large quantities by industries including many power plants. He began his quest after hearing the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency intends to regulate the material as toxic waste. Clearly, the EPA's move is part of the war on coal - and reasonable prices for electricity - being waged by President Barack Obama's administration. The coal ash initiative is just one of several tactics being used in an attempt to shut down even more power plants than the 220 or so coal-fired units already closed or scheduled to be shuttered. But McKinley, a professional engineer, understands the ramifications of proposed EPA action. It would affect not just power plants and other industries, but construction. Coal ash is an important component of concrete. McKinley's bill actually establishes for the first time a comprehensive system to regulate coal ash. States would be in charge of the process, but certain federal rules would have to be followed. For example, new safeguards involving coal ash impoundments are included. Fifty-four lawmakers signed on to McKinley's bill as co-sponsors - and they include 11 Democrats from 10 states. There is a reason thoughtful Democrats support McKinley's bill: They understand the EPA's plan would have serious consequences for most Americans, and that the agency's plan is far more draconian than necessary. In the Senate, Obama and Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., use an iron fist approach in demanding Democrat support for all aspects of the war on coal. A few Democrat senators, including Joe Manchin of West Virginia, already have had the courage to stand up for their constituents instead of bowing to party discipline.

MEADVILLE TRIBUNE

Number of natural gas drilling sites in county grows MEADVILLE — Last July, there was just one unconventional natural gas well active in the Utica Shale formation in Crawford County — but this July there are at least five such wells at three different sites in Crawford County, according to permits on file with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. The Utica and Marcellus shales are important geologic formations because they hold large reserves of natural gas and oil. Both regions extend through New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia, Ohio and portions of Kentucky and Tennessee. Crawford County has more of a prevalence of the Utica Shale formation which is at a depth of about 7,000 to 8,000 feet. The Marcellus Shale is at a depth of about 5,000 feet. Utica and Marcellus shale gas wells are considered unconventional since they are drilled both vertically then horizontally to get into the gas pockets. Natural gas from the Marcellus and Utica shales is valuable not only for the natural gas itself, but for conversion of liquids in the rock into other hydrocarbons used in plastics and other industries. Unconventional natural gas well drilling activity started in the county in June 2012 with issuing of a permit to Range Resources for a site in East Fairfield Township near Cochranton. The second unconventional Utica Shale well permit was issued in November 2012 to Halcon Resources for a site in North Shenango Township

ASSOCIATED PRESS (PA)

Head of Marcellus Shale Coalition stepping down (Sunday) The head of Pennsylvania's leading natural gas industry group said Friday that she'll be stepping down this fall. Marcellus Shale Coalition CEO Kathryn Klaber said she's proud of what the group has accomplished during the past four years. The coalition of drillers, pipeline companies and other industry-related businesses includes Chevron Corp., Peoples Natural Gas, Range Resources, and Talisman Energy, among others. C. Alan Walker, secretary of Pennsylvania's Department of Community and Economic Development, said Klaber "really helped lay the groundwork for the success of the industry." Coalition chair Dave Spigelmyer said the group is grateful for Klaber's tireless efforts. When the coalition was founded in 2008 Pennsylvania produced negligible amounts of natural gas, but production from the Marcellus Shale formation has boomed since then. Klaber said she's proud of the group's record on environmental issues. For example, the coalition supported a voluntary ban on taking drilling wastewater to municipal treatment plants in 2011 after scientists said the waste was threatening waterways. She also said that 97 percent of the natural gas produced in Pennsylvania comes from coalition members. The head of Pennsylvania's leading natural gas industry group said Friday that she'll be stepping down this fall. Marcellus Shale Coalition CEO Kathryn Klaber said she's proud of what the group has accomplished during the past four years. The coalition of drillers, pipeline companies and other industry-related businesses includes Chevron Corp., Peoples Natural Gas, Range Resources, and Talisman Energy, among others. C. Alan Walker, secretary of Pennsylvania's Department of Community and Economic Development, said Klaber "really helped lay the groundwork for the success of the industry." Coalition chair Dave Spigelmyer said the group is grateful for Klaber's tireless efforts. When the coalition was founded in 2008 Pennsylvania produced negligible amounts of natural gas, but production from the Marcellus Shale formation has boomed since then. Klaber said she's proud of the group's record on environmental issues. For example, the coalition supported a voluntary ban on taking drilling wastewater to municipal treatment plants in 2011 after scientists said the waste was threatening waterways. She also said that 97 percent of the natural gas produced in Pennsylvania comes from coalition members. Read more at http://www.philly.com/philly/business/20130726_ap_bc89c4f0fbad474cb52a2fc551e54166.html#WirexOYZiFXfPQGI.99

WASHINGTON, D.C.

WASHINGTON POST

US. groups working to open more public access to Chesapeake It's so big that it can be seen from space — 11,684 miles of shimmering shoreline, equaling the distance of the entire West Coast, from Mexico to Canada. But in this boiling-hot summer, good luck trying to get your boat or your body into the refreshing waters of the Chesapeake Bay. Only 2 percent of the bay has public access points for kayaks, canoes, fishing, bathing and other recreation. And some of those places are so packed with visitors on sunny weekends that motorists are forced to drive away or wait until someone leaves. The development of farmland and sales of private homes, combined with the deterioration of aging public docks and ramps, have blocked access to the bay and its rivers and streams from the general public. "I call it the world's biggest gated community, the Chesapeake Bay. There are probably 100 beaches in Anne Arundel County, but they are private beaches," said Mike Lofton, a retired economic development executive and an activist for bay access whose efforts helped open a public beach at Jack Creek Park, south of Annapolis, last week. "For the general Jack and Jill, there's no other beach to go to." Realizing that lack of access would also turn people away from concerns about the health of the nation's largest estuary and cradle for much of the Atlantic Ocean's marine life, President Obama issued an executive order three years ago to build 300 access points by 2025 — to complement slightly more than a thousand that exist in the bay watershed — but progress is slow.

DELAWARE

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL

Dover plant finishes environmentally-conscious overhaul (Sunday) NRG Energy, state and federal officials formally closed the book Friday on what had been Delaware's last remaining 'uncontrolled' coal-fired power plant, announcing the finish of a \$25 million overhaul of NRG's steam and power complex in west Dover.

Study says water taxi dock OK (Sunday) The geotechnical study asked for by the city of Rehoboth Beach to determine the feasibility of a water taxi terminus at the site of the Rehoboth Beach Museum has arrived, and it said the concept developed by the Lewes

MIDDLETOWN TRANSCRIPT

First finding of West Nile Virus for 2013 reported in DNREC's sentinel chickens Dover, Del. — West Nile Virus (WNV) has been detected in Delaware for the first time this year in blood samples taken from DNREC's sentinel chickens that are monitored for mosquito-borne diseases. The results were reported to DNREC July 26 by the Delaware Division of Public Health Laboratory. No cases of WNV have been found in wild birds, horses, or humans so far in Delaware this year. As of July 23, the federal Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has reported 31 human West Nile cases and three deaths nationwide in 14 states, with Mississippi, South Dakota and Nevada having the most cases to date. There are no approved WNV or eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) vaccines for humans. The majority of humans infected with WNV typically have symptoms similar to a mild flu, if they show any signs at all. Twenty percent develop a mild illness which includes fever, body and muscle aches, headache, nausea, vomiting and rash. To reduce mosquito-breeding, people should drain or remove items that collect water, such as discarded buckets or containers, uncovered trash cans, stagnant birdbaths, unprotected rain barrels or cisterns, old tires, upright wheelbarrows, flowerpot liners, depressions in tarps covering boats, clogged rain gutters, downspout extenders, and unused swimming pools

WEST VIRGINIA

CHARLESTON GAZETTE

U.S. Energy secretary: Obama committed to role for coal MORGANTOWN, W.Va. -- President Obama and the U.S. Department of Energy are committed to a role for coal in a national energy strategy, and they've backed it up with research spending, Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz said Monday. In a visit to the National Energy Technology Laboratory in Morgantown -- the only one of the federal government's 17 national labs dedicated to fossil fuels -- Moniz said the administration has spent \$6 billion on clean-coal technology with an emphasis on the capture, storage and reuse of carbon emissions. "We have an 'all of the above' strategy, and it's real," he said. But the administration also believes the U.S. must prepare for a low-carbon economy, so scientists must help find ways to use coal and gas more cleanly. Moniz spoke to hundreds of federal employees who work at the West Virginia lab, and to those who watched remotely from research sites and small offices in Pennsylvania, Oregon, Alaska and Texas. In all, the national lab employs 1,426 people, about 850 of whom are contractors. Last month, Obama laid out a general plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase both the production of clean energy and energy efficiency. That worries the coal industry and angers some of the politicians who support it, including U.S. Rep. David McKinley, a West Virginia Republican who has long questioned the science behind global warming. McKinley, who now acknowledges climate change but is not convinced human activity is to blame, accompanied Moniz on a tour of the lab but didn't speak to reporters. Moniz said the challenges from climate change are serious. The world is already seeing the effects in more severe floods, heat waves and droughts that drive up food and energy prices. Rising temperatures also stoke more intense storms that threaten electrical grids and other key infrastructure. "But we've always found a way to innovate our way to a more prosperous future," Moniz said, "and we will do the same in this case." Coal and natural gas industry officials have joked about the president's commitment to an "all of the above strategy," suggesting he means all energy sources aboveground. Moniz acknowledged the skepticism in coal country but insisted the commitment is genuine. He wouldn't predict how big the role for coal might be, saying that's up to consumers. But it will remain part of the fuel mix for decades to come.

Gas firms lose appeal on cemetery damage ruling (Sunday) CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- Two natural gas companies must pay nearly \$1 million in compensation for damaging a cemetery and overturning gravestones as they built a road to a drilling site in a historically black coal mining town in Logan County. General Pipeline Construction Co. and Equitable Production Co., now EQT, must pay \$914,000 to relatives of people buried in the cemetery in Sarah Ann, a small coal town near the Mingo County border where black coal miners lived. Late Friday afternoon, former Supreme Court Justice Elliott "Spike" Maynard released an order turning down an appeal filed by the two companies. General Pipeline and EQT were seeking to overturn a Nov. 20, 2012, Logan County jury verdict that found the companies guilty of damaging a cemetery and some of its graves, including overturning gravestones and metal markers. Relatives of some people buried in the cemetery filed a lawsuit after General Pipeline plowed through the cemetery in 2004, building a road to haul pipelines to a drilling site to transmit natural gas for EQT. General Pipeline and EQT filed motions for a new trial after the verdict, and Maynard held a hearing in February. He denied those motions, but neither company would sign an order formally recognizing Maynard's ruling, so another hearing was required. General Pipeline and Equitable wanted to stop all proceedings about damages to the cemetery until they resolved coverage issues with their own insurance companies. The companies now have 30 days to appeal the verdict to the West Virginia Supreme Court, according to Maynard's 10-page order issued on Friday. Maynard's order states, "A new trial should not be granted unless it is reasonably clear that prejudicial error has crept into the record or that substantial justice has not been done." Maynard's ruling stated that "there was no error in the [Logan County] Court" with respect to evidence introduced, testimony from expert witnesses and instructions to the jury. "There were no cumulative errors which would make the verdict unsupportable," against the two companies, Maynard wrote.

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CHARLESTON DAILY MAIL

WV Democrats to discuss coal with EPA chief, Obama advisers CHARLESTON, W.Va. - State Democratic lawmakers are meeting Thursday at the White House with the new leader of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and "senior advisers" to President Barack Obama. It shows the administration is taking state lawmaker's concerns about EPA rules and regulations relating to coal seriously, said West Virginia Democratic Party Chairman Larry Puccio. "We are scheduled to meet with EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy and senior advisers to President Obama," Puccio said in a news release. "We are looking forward to a thoughtful and productive discussion." Puccio announced the trip to Washington last week, but he said details about where and with whom the group would meet were still in the works. On Monday, he said he hadn't previously known they'd be able to meet with McCarthy or "senior advisers" to the president, and he's very excited for the trip. Puccio was one of several state Democrats to speak at last week's announcement. Senate President Jeff Kessler, D-Marshall, and House Speaker Tim Miley, D-Harrison, both emphasized the importance of the trip. During last week's announcement, there was little talk about specific regulations or rules that lawmakers thought were hurting the state. After the press event, both Kessler and Miley said deadlines for coal companies to meet carbon emission standards are a concern. The three Democratic members of the national delegation - U.S. Sens. Jay Rockefeller and Joe Manchin and U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall - each endorsed the trip when it was announced. Last week, Puccio said the trip is not a reflection on their efforts to voice concerns from West Virginians about the EPA or the president's energy policy.

Editorial: The gas industry has a good story to tell Recent comments by a retired oil and gas industry executive shows there is room for improvement on both sides of the natural gas fracking debate. Former Shell Oil President John Hofmeister told The Associated Press that arrogance and lack of communication by the industry has helped fuel public anger over of hydraulic fracturing. That's unfortunate, because the oil and gas industry has a good story to tell. Technological improvements in drilling have reduced the nation's reliance on foreign oil imports and created a domestic drilling boom. The U.S. Energy Information Administration reports that oil imports are down 22.5 percent from their high in 2005. In West Virginia, employment in the natural gas industry has nearly tripled since 2001. "Suddenly we have a 200-year supply of natural gas, when just a few years ago some predicted our supplies were running out," wrote Greg Kozera, president of the West Virginia Oil and Natural Gas Association. Fracturing natural gas reservoirs is not new. It was developed in the 1940s to extract more natural gas. It's the ability to facture tight shale formations that's new. Hydraulic fracturing uses massive amounts of water with a small amount of additives. The water must be handled with care when it flows back to the surface. Some opponents of fracking raise legitimate concerns, but some are highly exaggerated. The documentary "Gasland," by environmental activist Josh Fox, is fraught with so much bias that the industry produced a counter, "Truthland." Experts say both pro- and anti- drilling movements have good points. Jeff Frankel, an economics professor at Harvard, says the fracking revolution is good news from a national security and economic standpoint, but still urges caution.

BLUEFIELD DAILY TELEGRAPH

Global demand for U.S. metallurgical coal has impact locally BLUEFIELD — Even a casual observer would likely notice that the flow of coal through the Norfolk Southern Railway’s normally busy Bluefield yard has slowed considerably this summer. Even record hot spells in the heavily populated eastern United States haven’t pushed up the demand for domestic thermal coal, and the international markets for metallurgical or steel-making coal appear flat compared to five years ago. Most of the coal that passes through the NS Bluefield yard headed east is going to NS’s port operations at Lambert’s Point in Hampton Roads, Va. It’s been that way since 1883 — 130 years in all. Five years ago, the metallurgical coalfields of southern West Virginia and southwestern Virginia were riding a high tide of global growth that was fueled in part by an economic growth spurt in China and some unpredictable weather-related challenges in other met coal exporting countries. In 2008, the total of coal exports from West Virginia and Virginia combined amounted to 32,458,000 short tons of coal — more than half the 56,702,000 short tons mined in all 11 eastern states, and well ahead of the 66,267, 000 short tons in the 13 coal-producing states in the west. Those figures continued to climb each year through 2011, when the two Virginias exported a combined total of nearly 46 million short tons of coal. That trend has not continued. “Coking coal demand and prices reached record price levels during 2008 mainly because of China’s dramatic increase in production of steel in recent years and demand for coking coals,” according to Homeland Energy Group Ltd., report. “Coal prices hit around \$360/\$380 per metric ton in mid-2008, (up) from around \$140/\$160 per metric ton in the previous 3/4 years.” The report indicates that the price has dropped because of the decline of the surge in China and other countries. “The markets are very, very tight right now,” Rick Taylor, president of the Pocahontas Coal Association said. “The costs of mining coal is up and the price of coal is very competitive among our competitors,” he added, making reference to other global coal-producing countries. “There’s more coal on the market now than is being consumed.” Taylor said that typical free market forces work to bring coal prices down when supply is high and demand is low. He said that present prices for metallurgical coal are about one-third of the price that coal was bringing in mid-2008. At the same time, he said the present price for coal is three times what it was in 1998. “I am often asked how much coal is left in the United States, and I respond that it’s a function of the price of coal,” Taylor said. He explained that during periods of high demand for coal, operators can mine coal in thin seams that might have been too costly to have mined when coal was fetching a higher price.

HUNTINGTON HERALD-DISPATCH

Truck crashes into creek, narrowly misses gas line HUNTINGTON -- A white pickup truck ended up in a creek in the 1600 block of Arlington Boulevard on Monday afternoon in an accident that could have been much worse.

WEST VIRGINIA RECORD

Coal company's request for rehearing of case against EPA denied WASHINGTON – A federal appeals court has denied a coal company's petition to rehear a controversial case that appears now headed for the U.S. Supreme Court. On July 25, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit issued an order denying Mingo Logan Coal Company's request to have its case against the Environmental Protection Agency heard by the entire roster of judges on the court. A three-judge panel ruled against Mingo Logan in April, finding the EPA had the authority to withdraw portions of a Clean Water Act permit issued to the company for its Spruce No. 4 Mine in Logan County. In June, the company hired former U.S. Solicitor General Paul Clement and asked for a rehearing en banc. The order denying it says no member of the court requested a vote on the matter. The case made headlines on April 23 when the D.C. Circuit ruled the EPA could withdraw terms of a Clean Water Act permit already granted to the company by the Army Corps of Engineers for its work on a mountaintop removal mine in Logan County. The decision to withdraw the specification of discharge sites after a permit was issued is unprecedented in the history of the Clean Water Act, U.S. District Judge Amy Berman Jackson wrote in March 2012. D.C. Circuit Judge Karen L. Henderson wrote the court's opinion. "But again, (the Clean Water Act's) language is plain with regard to its enumerated 'unacceptable adverse effects': the Administrator retains authority to withdraw a specified disposal site 'whenever' he determines such effects will result from discharges at the sites," Henderson wrote. "And when he withdraws a disposal site specification, as he did here, the disposal site's 'terms and conditions specified' in the permit... are in effect amended so that discharges at the previously specified disposal sites are no longer in '(c)ompliance with' the permit – although the permit itself remains otherwise in effect to the extent it is usable." A footnote mentions that EPA "has made clear" that a permittee will not be penalized for discharges made under a permit before the effective date of the withdrawal of any of its terms. The permit was issued on Jan. 22, 2007, by the Army Corps of Engineers. It authorized Mingo Logan to discharge fill material from its Spruce No. 1 coal mine into nearby streams, including the Pigeonroost and Oldhouse branches and their tributaries.

WHEELING INTELLIGENCER

Devonian shale offers another layer for natural gas drillers in W.Va. WHEELING, West Virginia — Move aside, Marcellus and Utica shales, and make way for a new player in the natural gas bonanza: the Devonian Shale. Earlier this month, Consol Energy became the third company to successfully extract natural gas from the Devonian, following Rex Energy Corp. and Range Resources Corp. The company's drilling attempt took place in Greene County, Pennsylvania, which lies on the eastern border of Marshall County and the northeastern border of Wetzel County. Tim Carr, Marshall Miller professor of energy at West Virginia University, said the Upper Devonian is a mix of sandstone and other forms of rock. It lies just above the Marcellus Shale, which underlies much of West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Ohio. The Utica Shale is a much older formation that lies deeper within the earth compared to the Marcellus and Upper Devonian, he said. "There are lots of black shale units," Carr said regarding the Upper Devonian Shale. "How much gas and liquids is the question. There is no answer at the present. There is potential." "The Devonian Shale was the target of a lot of drilling activity back in the late 1970s and the

1980s," added Robert W. Chase, professor of petroleum engineering and geology at Marietta College. "It produced both oil and gas, but was not as prolific as the Marcellus or Utica because it was not very deep and didn't have as much pressure as the deeper formations." Consol's first endeavor into the formation hit the Upper Devonian at 12,490 feet deep in Greene County, according to the company's quarterly filing report. It drew about 3 million cubic feet per day, roughly a third of the output of two nearby Marcellus wells. Consol drilled its Upper Devonian Shale well in the Burkett formation, which is the deepest of numerous Upper Devonian shales. Consol officials said they chose to drill their first well in the Burkett in order to test the potential interaction with deeper Marcellus Shale wells. Corky Demarco, executive director of the West Virginia Oil and Natural Gas Association, said most of the Upper Devonian wells drilled in the Mountain State have largely resulted in the production of dry methane gas, rather than liquids or oil. He said it is "considerably" cheaper to drill an Upper Devonian well because it is not as deep or complex as one in the Marcellus or Utica. Instead of millions of gallons of water, sand and chemicals, Demarco said Upper Devonian wells in West Virginia are usually fracked with hydrogen. "If natural gas prices increase, you could see more of these wells drilled," he said.

ASSOCIATED PRESS (W. VA.)

State wildlife area becomes site for gas drilling JACKSONBURG, W.Va. -- The Lewis Wetzel Wildlife Management Area in Wetzel County has become home to more than deer and other critters. Several energy companies have moved into Lewis Wetzel to drill for natural gas. The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources owns the surface land. But the DNR owns mineral rights to only 400 acres in the 13,590-acre wildlife area. Private individuals own the remaining mineral rights, and some are leasing these rights to energy companies. "The mineral owners have the legal right to retrieve their minerals from the land," Steven Rauch, a DNR biologist who oversees the preserve, told The Intelligencer and Wheeling News-Register. Rauch said that the DNR is working with the companies to minimize the impact of drilling on the preserve. "Most of them try to cooperate with us," he said. Most of Lewis Wetzel, which is a popular hunting site, has not been affected or the effects have been temporary, Rauch said. But drilling equipment and the noise can have a negative impact on hunters. "They limit the work the best they can during turkey season and deer season," Rauch said. "When they are working, those sections are closed off to the hunters as a safety precaution." Department of Environmental Protection spokeswoman Kathy Cosco said that there have been some drilling-related environmental problems in the preserve in the past, and the DEP has issued several notices of violation. The notices required the companies to repair some slips, install silt fencing to manage sediment and erosion, and take samples in a nearby stream. "We have taken representatives of the DNR along on site visits during the various stages of the drilling, including the reclamation phases," Cosco said. Rauch said Lewis Wetzel is a popular wildlife management area and the DNR will work to preserve it.

Dumping worsens Charleston neighborhoods flooding CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- A Charleston official says illegal dumping in a creek is worsening a flood-prone neighborhood's problem. Public Works director Gary Taylor tells WSAZ-TV that trash and other debris block culverts, increasing the risk of flooding along Garrison Avenue when it rains. Taylor says his crews clean the creek whenever heavy rains are predicted. But more trash appears, often just hours after the creek is cleaned. Resident Bruce Gunnoe says the illegal dumping is putting lives and homes at risl.

W.Va. agency wraps up public meetings on rail plan CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- Information gathered during a series of public meetings around West Virginia will help the state develop a plan for freight and passenger rail service for the next 20 to 30 years, said Cindy Butler, executive director of the State...

MARYLAND

BALTIMORE SUN

Letter: O'Malley is right on climate change, should speak out on Keystone XL Bravo to Gov. Martin O'Malley for his speech last week outlining plans for further curbing greenhouse gases in the state of Maryland ("O'Malley says state has 'moral obligation' to avert climate change," July 25)! Have you seen the maps of Maryland showing the extent of land to be underwater as the ocean and the Chesapeake Bay rise? Has your homeowners insurance rate suddenly jumped to cover the potential for damage from extreme weather? Do you remember recent times when Fells Point was flooded or power was out for days at a time?

Clean water advocates take the plunge to promote swimmable waterways Sunday's event was designed as a break from conversations about the dire issues facing the Chesapeake Bay — and more about celebrating what is working ..

VIRGINIA

RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH

Blog: Sound measures show progress in the Chesapeake (Sunday) The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) and Choose Clean Water Coalition's (CCWC) op-ed published July 9 unfortunately failed to give readers a full and accurate picture of Virginia's efforts to restore the health of the Chesapeake Bay. Let me follow the same "report card" analogy they used. Imagine if your child received a "C" on a 42-question test and you found out later the teacher based the grade on only eight of the 42 test questions? Then imagine if the teacher announced your child's interim grade in the school newspaper, touting your child's failures. Not fair, right? That is exactly the approach used by these Maryland-based groups in their flawed analysis and commentary on Virginia's Chesapeake Bay milestones. **The Bay milestones**, a series of 42 measures and techniques, were established as short-term checkpoints toward accomplishing pollution reductions called for under the Chesapeake Bay's "pollution diet" established by the Environmental Protection Agency. Each state that shares in the care of the Chesapeake Bay projects the number of pollution reduction actions that will be taken in the next two years. We are in the middle of a milestone period and so, by definition, our current milestones are not complete. It is also regrettable that the CBF and CCWC didn't take the time to consult Virginia's career technical experts who have uncovered significant flaws in the EPA's Chesapeake Bay computer model that produces results contrary to the actual implementation by Virginia farmers, localities, businesses and others. Other Bay states have joined with Virginia to point out these computer flaws that underestimate the pollution reduction impact of Virginia's actions.

NEWPORT NEWS DAILY PRESS

Depleted stock could mean change in eel fishery Every spring when baby eels drift into the Chesapeake Bay from the Atlantic, then swim like mad up tributary rivers and creeks toward fresh water, Troy Tuckey is waiting for them. The researcher with the Virginia Institute of Marine Science in Gloucester Point sets up Irish elver boxes at four critical points along major rivers to capture, count, measure, weigh and release the babies — called glass eels for their thin, translucent bodies, about the width of a pencil lead. It's a survey he's conducted for the past 13 years on the James, York and Rappahannock rivers, on the lookout for early warning signs the species is in trouble.In recent years, signs in Virginia and elsewhere indicate it is. "The American eel was one of the most abundant fish species," Tuckey said, stretching back to when Native Americans taught early European settlers at Jamestown how to "stomp" eels out of the mud. But last year a coastwide benchmark stock assessment called the American eel population in U.S. waters "depleted." It blamed an array of factors, including overfishing, predation, turbine deaths from hydroelectric dams, changes in the food web, pollution and disease. Fluctuating market

prices can also cause commercial landings to flounder.

CHARLOTTENVILLE DAILY PROGRESS

Commentary: Cleanup of toxic site in Earlsyville long overdue, regulators say Environmental regulators say cleanup of a contaminated Earlsyville plant site is almost three decades overdue. But the work in assessing the extent of the problem is just beginning. Five toxins — including tetrachloroethylene, a carcinogen — have been found at the site of a shuttered aircraft parts manufacturer near the southwest corner of the Charlottesville Albemarle Airport and the Walnut Hill neighborhood. The federal Environmental Protection Agency is in the early stages of an 18-month investigation to determine the scope of the contamination. A review of hundreds of pages of state Department of Environmental Quality records shows the origins trace to 1986 — a half-dozen years before Teledyne Industries sold the site to Avionics Specialties Inc. Teledyne destroyed an underground tank on the property as part of a standard remediation operation. That tank held metal sludge and hazardous waste, according to Teledyne and Avionics. “The accumulated metal sludges were removed, the tank was steam-cleaned, the tank’s top was removed and one or more holes were jack-hammered through the bottom of the tank to prevent accumulation of rainwater,” Avionics said in a 2008 report. “The area, including what remained of this structure, was back-filled and graded.” In correspondence with the city of Charlottesville, Teledyne advised that the company had hauled non-hazardous waste to the Ivy Landfill and hazardous materials to a toxic waste dump in Michigan. But not all of the toxins were gone. Twenty-seven years later, toxic chemical solvents lurk in soil and groundwater both at the plant site and in the neighboring subdivision. Avionics and state environmental regulators link the problem to Teledyne. EPA field work at the site is expected to be finished in August, said project manager Donna McCartney. “We only started the investigation, so we don’t even know the entire universe of contaminants that may be present,” McCartney said. “But before anything else, the extent of the contamination needs to be delineated.”

FREDERICKSBURG FREELANCE STAR

Editorial: Change in the air (Sunday) DOMINION Virginia Power earlier this month turned the key on the first of three power plants that it is converting from coal to biomass-burning. It’s a small step but nevertheless one in the right direction for the company and the power industry in general. The first plant, located in the Southside community of Altavista, went online on July 12. Two other converted plants, one in Hopewell and the other in Southampton County, are due to be up and running by year’s end. All told, it’s a \$165 million corporate investment. As coal-fired plants, they had been run intermittently to help meet peak energy needs. Running continuously using biomass—mostly wood waste leftover from logging operations—the three plants will supply electricity for 12,500 of Dominion’s roughly 2 million Virginia customers. As many as another million Virginia households are served by other companies and co-ops. To add a little more perspective, the 153 megawatts the three plants will generate represent only about 0.6 percent of the total 27,000 megawatts the company generates. Dominion says its goal is to help Virginia meet its voluntary renewable energy goal of 15 percent by 2025. In pursuit of that, Dominion also operates an 83-megawatt biomass plant in Pittsylvania County, one of the East Coast’s largest, plus another partial biomass plant in Wise County—ironically in the heart of coal country. The new conversions of the three plants alone will mean that the nearly 600,000 tons of coal they would have burned each year, won’t be.

ASSOCIATED PRESS (VA.)

Former aircraft parts plant site in Va. to be cleaned up, EPA assessing contaminants (Monday) CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. — Federal regulators are assessing pollutants at the site of a former aircraft parts manufacturer near the Charlottesville Albemarle Airport to determine the scope of the contamination. Toxic chemical solvents have been found in soil and groundwater at the site and in the Walnut Hills subdivision. Tetrachloroethlyne is a carcinogen. The Environmental Protection Agency is expected to complete field work at the site in August, said Donna McCartney, the project manager. The investigation is expected to last 18 months. We only started the investigation, so we don’t even know the entire universe of contaminants that may be present,” McCartney told The Daily Progress (<http://bit.ly/14XycB1>). “But before anything else, the extent of the contamination needs to be delineated.” The plant formerly was owned by Teledyne. Its current owner, Avionics Specialties Inc., discovered the contamination in 2007 as it was preparing to close the plant and sell it. The company subsequently contacted homeowners in the subdivision and the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. Ten homes in the subdivision were outfitted with carbon filters as a precaution. Properties closest to the plant site are monitored by both the DEQ and Avionics, DEQ spokesman William Hayden told the newspaper. Hayden said that homeowners weren’t told by the DEQ that one of the contaminants, tetrachloroethylene, is a carcinogen. “We would not have told them any of the side effects. We’re not health experts,” Hayden said. In 2008, Avionics applied for a voluntary remediation permit to address the contamination but the state denied the application, saying there were insufficient data to construct a detailed environmental history of the site. Avionics then conducted historical and scientific studies in an attempt to locate the contamination’s source. The DEQ contacted the EPA in 2010. Two years later, the EPA announced a settlement with both companies to investigate the contamination and alternatives for cleanup. “A process should not take this long when, in fact, there are chemicals involved that could be harmful,” said Michael Kane, president of the Walnut Hill Homeowners Association. Kane said the situation should have been remedied in 2007. “Trying to figure out who was responsible — Teledyne, Avionics, everyone else. It was finger-pointing. That’s all it was,” Kane said. “That’s the frustration.”

MISCELLANEOUS

NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO -- RADIO TIMES

An update on the U.S. natural gas boom ([Audio Link](#)) (Monday) GUESTS: MARIE CUSICK & ABRAHM LUSTGARTEN. The hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking,” process of drilling natural gas from Pennsylvania’s Marcellus Shale has reportedly been getting a lot of foreign interest as a potential solution to global energy problems. In about five years the shale boom has changed the domestic energy economy, but there are reports the U.S. is considering exporting the gas beyond our shores. Meanwhile Governor Corbett has signed a bill into law allowing gas companies to combine, or ‘poof’ leases – many signed before the advent of fracking. We get an update on the local issues of Marcellus Shale drilling with State Impact Pennsylvania’s **MARIE CUSICK** and a broader look at natural gas extraction with ProPublica’s **ABRAHM LUSTGARTEN**.
- See more at: <http://why.org/cms/radiotimes/2013/07/29/an-update-on-the-u-s-natural-gas-boom/#sthash.0RweXpzf.dpuf>

BLOOMBERG NEWS SERVICE

Fracking tied to Pennsylvania water woes by EPA state official WASHINGTON — Gas drilling caused “significant damage” to drinking-water aquifers in a Pennsylvania town at the center of a fight over the safety of hydraulic fracturing, according to a report prepared by a federal official. The previously unreleased document from an employee at the Environmental Protection Agency’s regional office found that fracking, in which water, sand and chemicals are shot underground to free trapped gas, caused methane to leak into domestic water wells in Dimock, Pa. The findings contradict Cabot Oil and Gas Corp., which drilled in the town and said the explosive methane gas was naturally occurring. “Methane is released during the drilling and perhaps during the fracking process and other gas well work,” according to the undated power-point presentation prepared by the EPA coordinator in Dimock, who isn’t identified, for other agency officials. The report, obtained by Bloomberg from fracking critics, is based on a chemical analysis of methane in wells. The EPA said the findings in the presentation were preliminary and needed more study. Dimock has become a symbol for opponents questioning the safety of fracking. In 2010, state regulators stepped in and said Cabot’s drilling contaminated local wells, a finding disputed by the company. A subsequent EPA investigation said the water posed no health risks to town residents. “You would really expect the federal

government to follow up on this,” Kate Sindig, director of the Natural Resources Defense Council’s fracking defense project, said in an interview about this report. While the internal report, disclosed by the *Los Angeles Times* on July 27, doesn’t necessarily contradict the EPA’s 2012 finding of elevated levels of methane and conclusion that the water was safe to drink, it does show that at least one official determined that Cabot’s work damaged the water wells.

Fracking Tied to Pennsylvania’s Water Woes by EPA Official (1) An Environmental Protection Agency employee said gas drilling damaged drinking-water aquifers in a Pennsylvania town, according to a presentation the staffer prepared for superiors before they agreed to end deliveries of clean water to the residents. The previously unreleased document found that drilling known as hydraulic fracturing or fracking, in which water, sand and chemicals are shot underground to free trapped gas, caused methane to leak into domestic water wells in Dimock, Pennsylvania. The findings contradict those of Cabot Oil and Gas Corp. ([COG:US](#)), which drilled in the town and said the explosive methane gas was naturally occurring in domestic wells. “Methane is released during the drilling and perhaps during the fracking process and other gas well work,” according to the undated power-point presentation prepared by the EPA coordinator in Dimock, who isn’t identified, for other agency officials. The report, obtained by Bloomberg from fracking critics, is based on a chemical analysis of methane in wells from 2008 through July 2012. The EPA said the findings in the presentation were preliminary and more study is needed. Dimock, featured in the anti-fracking film “Gasland,” has become a symbol for opponents questioning the safety of fracking. In 2010, state regulators stepped in and said Cabot’s drilling contaminated local wells, a finding disputed by the company. A subsequent EPA investigation said the water posed no health risks to town residents. The internal report, disclosed by the Los Angeles Times on July 27, doesn’t necessarily contradict the EPA’s conclusion released in July 2012 that the water in the Dimock homes was safe to drink. The EPA had already shown elevated levels of methane in some homes, but the agency doesn’t set a limit on methane levels in water, as the gas doesn’t impair the smell or taste of water. It can be explosive. The report does show that at least one official determined that Cabot’s work damaged the water wells. “You would really expect the federal government to follow up on this,” Kate Sinding, director of the Natural Resources Defense Council’s fracking defense project, said in an interview about this report. In Dimock and two other cases, the EPA abandoned its investigation “without a satisfactory explanation to the people in the communities,” she said.

NRDC BLOG

Why Would EPA Hide Info on Fracking & Water Contamination in Dimock? The *Los Angeles Times* published a [story](#) today reporting on a leaked document that indicates that the Environmental Protection Agency has never conveyed to the public the possibility that methane released during drilling “**and perhaps during the fracking process**” resulted in “significant,” and possibly long-term, “damage to the water quality” of a drinking water source for 19 families in Dimock, Pennsylvania, even though some staff believed this was the case. The story reports that this crucial interpretation – which stands in stark contrast to the narrative being pushed by industry that EPA found Dimock’s water to be “safe” – was evidently presented to the highest level staff in the region sometime in the spring of 2012. Yet EPA closed its investigation of contaminated drinking water supplies in Dimock just months later (July 2012), declaring that it was no longer necessary for residents to be provided with alternative drinking water supplies. In doing so, it provided no justification based on the data it had in its possession, which some believed pointed to significant and possibly long-term damage to local drinking water. EPA simply walked away and asked the public and the residents of Dimock to take its word for it. Indeed, the agency did not even mention the word “methane” at all in its [press release](#) announcing the end of the investigation. As a result, it was widely reported in the mainstream press that EPA had found the water in Dimock was “safe” to drink (see, for example, [here](#) and [here](#)). This perception persists among many in the general public. If this news is true, why has EPA failed to provide a proper scientific explanation for effectively declaring Dimock’s water safe, and why has it abandoned the residents of Dimock? Is it because of pressure from the oil & gas industry? We don’t know. But the people of Dimock deserve some answers.

GRIST

Leaked EPA document raises questions about fracking pollution The EPA doesn’t seem very interested in finding out whether fracking pollutes groundwater. The latest indication of this emerged over the weekend [in the Los Angeles Times](#). Residents of the small town of Dimock in northeastern Pennsylvania have long been convinced that Cabot Oil and Gas Corp. was poisoning their drinking water by fracking the land around them. In July of last year, [the EPA announced](#) that although water from some local wells contained “naturally occurring” arsenic, barium, and manganese, the agency was ending its investigation there without fingering the any culprits. Now we find out that staff at a regional EPA office were worried about the role of fracking in polluting the town’s water, but their concerns appear to have been ignored by their bosses. An internal EPA PowerPoint presentation prepared by regional staffers for their superiors and obtained by the *L.A. Times* paints an alarming picture of potential links between water contamination and fracking. And it reinforces the perception that the EPA is giving a free pass to the fracking industry, perhaps because natural gas plays a key role in President Obama’s quest for “energy independence” and an “all of the above” energy portfolio. [From the L.A. Times article](#):

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS TIMES

Fracking Debate: EPA Staffer Linked Methane Contamination To Fracking In Internal Docs The debate over fracking’s effect on the environment continues to rage in the public sphere – and, as newly uncovered documents show, within the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency itself. The Los Angeles Times [recently obtained](#) a PowerPoint presentation on the water quality in Dimock, Pa., given by staff from an EPA office in Philadelphia. Dimock is a township that attracted national attention starting in 2009 when methane was found in 13 of its [water wells](#). The presentation, which is based on data collected over more than four years by both Pennsylvania authorities and the EPA, says methane and other gases released during natural gas drilling “apparently cause significant damage to the water quality.” Methane is the primary ingredient in natural gas, and threatens both explosion and asphyxiation when in enclosed spaces, though its long-term impact on human health is not well understood. It’s thought that methane and other contaminants can creep into water supplies through flaws in drilling wells. Dimock residents’ fears for their water quality featured prominently in the 2010 documentary “Gasland.” That was also the year [that Pennsylvania’s Department of Environmental Protection said](#) Dimock’s [water problems](#) stemmed directly from natural gas drilling by Cabot Oil & Gas Corp.

BNA DAILY ENVIRONMENT REPORT

Moniz Says Carbon Capture Technology Needed to Fight Climate Change Coal and other fossil fuels will be “a major part of our energy future for decades,” Energy Secretary Moniz says in remarks at the department’s National Energy Technology Laboratory in Morgantown, W.Va., which conducts research on “pre-commercial” energy technologies, including those related to carbon capture. Research on the development of clean coal technologies is needed to combat climate change, Moniz says,

EPA Says Additional Data Available for Rule on Coal Ash Management EPA announces the availability of data it says will help it develop a final rule on the management of coal ash. The agency says it will solicit public comment on additional data that could affect its regulatory impact analysis and risk assessment, its definition of large-scale fill operations, and additional data on surface impoundment structural integrity assessments. EPA has not indicated when it will issue a final rule on management of coal ash from power plants.

GREENWIRE

Court sides with homeowners in dry-cleaning groundwater contamination case Federal judges on Friday said a Las Vegas dry cleaner is responsible for the cleanup costs of groundwater contamination near a shopping center, but the judges ordered a lower court to review the case again because the current owner was not responsible for the toxic releases. At issue are multiple lawsuits before the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals relating to hundreds of gallons of spilled tetrachloroethylene, or PCE, a carcinogen. Neighboring homeowners and the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) brought lawsuits under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), which created the Superfund program, and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. The San Francisco-based based court unanimously upheld several lower court rulings in favor of the homeowners and NDEP, which was seeking to recover cleanup costs. The dry cleaner in question has operated at the Maryland Square Shopping Center since 1969. From then until 2000, it was owned by the Herman Kishner Trust, which leased it to various operators.

EPA: Jackson joins commission to reach out to black community on climate change The former head of U.S. EPA will serve on a commission sponsored by Washington, D.C.-based think tank the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies that raises awareness about environmental and climate change issues in the African-American community. Former EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson, who stepped down in February after serving for four years, will participate in the Joint Center's Commission to Engage African Americans on Energy, Climate Change and the Environment. Ralph Everett, president and CEO of the center and a co-chairman of the commission, said in a news release that the former administrator "has worked tirelessly and effectively to ensure that the benefits of a cleaner environment flow to all communities." He added, "Her expertise will be invaluable as we continue to address the challenges of building a vibrant economy while reducing the burdens of pollution that often fall disproportionately on communities of color."

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Masses of plastic particles found in Great Lakes TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. (AP) - Already ravaged by toxic algae, invasive mussels and industrial pollution, the Great Lakes now confront another potential threat that few had even imagined until recently: untold millions of plastic litter bits, some visible only through a microscope. Scientists who have studied gigantic masses of floating plastic in the world's oceans are now reporting similar discoveries in the lakes that make up nearly one-fifth of the world's fresh water. They retrieved the particles from Lakes Superior, Huron and Erie last year. This summer, they're widening the search to Lakes Michigan and Ontario, skimming the surface with finely meshed netting dragged behind sailing vessels. "If you're out boating in the Great Lakes, you're not going to see large islands of plastic," said Sherri Mason, a chemist with State University of New York at Fredonia and one of the project leaders. "But all these bits of plastic are out there." Experts say it's unclear how long "microplastic" pollution has been in the lakes or how it is affecting the environment. Studies are under way to determine whether fish are eating the particles.

NEW YORK TIMES

Commentary: Gangplank to a Warm Future!THACA, N.Y. — MANY concerned about climate change, including President Obama, have embraced hydraulic fracturing for natural gas. In his recent climate speech, the president went so far as to lump gas with renewables as “clean energy.” As a longtime oil and gas engineer who helped develop shale fracking techniques for the Energy Department, I can assure you that this gas is not “clean.” Because of leaks of methane, the main component of natural gas, the gas extracted from shale deposits is not a “bridge” to a renewable energy future — it’s a gangplank to more warming and away from clean energy investments. Methane is a far more powerful greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide, though it doesn’t last nearly as long in the atmosphere. Still, over a 20-year period, one pound of it traps as much heat as at least 72 pounds of carbon dioxide. Its potency declines, but even after a century, it is at least 25 times as powerful as carbon dioxide. When burned, natural gas emits half the carbon dioxide of coal, but methane leakage eviscerates this advantage because of its heat-trapping power. And methane is leaking, though there is significant uncertainty over the rate. But recent measurements by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration at gas and oil fields in California, Colorado and Utah found leakage rates of 2.3 percent to 17 percent of annual production, in the range my colleagues at Cornell and I predicted some years ago. This is the gas that is released into the atmosphere unburned as part of the hydraulic fracturing process, and also from pipelines, compressors and processing units. Those findings raise questions about what is happening elsewhere. The Environmental Protection Agency has issued new rules to reduce these emissions, but the rules don’t take effect until 2015, and apply only to new wells.

Plan for Yosemite would scale back human activity YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, Calif. -- Far humbler corners of America have faced a similar dilemma: How much human activity should be allowed in a natural setting that is also promoted as a tourist destination? The National Park Service is proposing a significant makeover of Yosemite National Park that would change the way future generations of visitors experience the park, especially the 7-mile-long Yosemite Valley at its heart. The Park Service's plan would restore more than 200 acres of meadows, reorganize transportation and reduce traffic congestion. To shrink the human presence along the Merced River, park officials are also proposing closing nearby rental facilities for bicycling, horseback riding and rafting, as well as removing swimming pools, an ice rink and a stone bridge.